

Application No.: Not Yet Assigned
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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-39 and 41-64.

Please amend claim 40 and add new claims 65-78 as follows:

40. (Amended) A method of enhancing lignification in a vascular plant, comprising suppressing expression of an AGL8-like gene product comprising a polypeptide at least 50% identical to SEQ ID NO:2 [expression] in said vascular plant, [whereby lignification is enhanced] thereby enhancing lignification.

65. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the AGL8-like gene product is at least 75% identical to SEQ ID NO:2.

66. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the AGL8-like gene product comprises SEQ ID NO:2.

67. (New) The method of claim 40, comprising introducing into the plant a promoter operatively linked in the sense orientation to a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide at least 50% identical to SEQ ID NO:2, thereby suppressing expression of the AGL8-like gene product.

68. (New) The method of claim 40, comprising introducing into the plant a promoter operatively linked in the antisense orientation to a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide at least 50% identical to SEQ ID NO:2, thereby suppressing expression of the AGL8-like gene product.

69. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein said vascular plant is a woody plant.

70. (New) The method of claim 69, wherein said woody plant is selected from the group consisting of Eucalyptus, cottonwood, alder, Douglas fir, Hemlock, pine and spruce.

71. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein said vascular plant is a leguminous plant.

72. (New) The method of claim 71, wherein said leguminous plant is selected from the group consisting of alfalfa, clover, lucerne, birdsfoot trefoil, *Stylosanthes*, *Lotononis bainesii* and sainfoin.

73. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein said vascular plant is a forage grass.

74. (New) The method of claim 73, wherein said grass is selected from the group consisting of bahiagrass, bermudagrass, dallisgrass, pangolagrass, big bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, smooth brome grass, orchardgrass, timothy, Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue.

75. (New) A transgenic plant characterized by enhanced lignification, the transgenic plant comprising a promoter operatively linked to a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide at least 50% identical to SEQ ID NO:2.

76. (New) The transgenic plant of claim 75, wherein the promoter is operatively linked to the polynucleotide in the sense orientation.

77. (New) The transgenic plant of claim 75, wherein the promoter is operatively linked to the polynucleotide in the antisense orientation.

78. (New) A tissue derived from a transgenic plant of claim 75.

REMARKS

1. Status of the claims

With this Amendment, claims 1-39 and 41-64 are canceled without prejudice to subsequent revival. Claim 40 is amended and claims 65-78 are added. Therefore, claims 40 and 65-78 are pending with entry of this Amendment.